(f) if so, to what extent India and E.U. have decided to improve trade relations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) During Prime Minister's Summit Meeting in Copenhagen, there was a review of bilateral relations and multilateral issues of mutual concern. The EU was appreciative of the succuessful holding of election in J&K and issued a positive press statement to this effect. No agreement were signed during the visit.

(d) No Sir, does not arise.

(e) and (f) At the Third India-EU Business Summit it was agreed that ambitious targets should be set and current level of trade of Euro 25 billion should go up to Euro 35 billion by 2005 and should double by 2008 through enhanced trade and economic interaction.

New Cultural Centres

"150. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Ministei of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to State:

(a) whether in order to promote India's foreign policy, Government have since decided to open new cultural centres;

(b) if so, the numbers thereof and the places where these would be set up;

(c) by when these would be operational; and

(d) how many cultural centres are already functioning all over the world alongwith the locations thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (c) Cultural Centres are periodically opened in different countries with a view to promoting India's composite cultural heritage abroad.

(d) The Indian Council for Cultural Relations has set up 14 Cultural Centres abroad. These Centres are located at Georgetown (Guyana), Paramaribo (Suriname), Port Louis (Mauritius), Jakarta (Indonesia), Moscow (Russia), Berlin (Germany), Cairo (Egypt), London (United Kingdom), Johannesburg (South Africa), Durban (South Africa), Almaty

(Kazakhstan), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago) and Colombo (Sri Lanka).

Tripartite talks on labour panel recommendations

*151. SHRI A. VIJAYRAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the 'Hindu' dated the 11 th November, 2002 under the caption "Government urged to hold tripartite talks on labour panel recommendations",

(b) whether the State Insurance and Provident Fund Schemes would be extended to unorganized sector;

(c) whether minimum wages would be determined in the light of the recommendations of the 15th session of Indian Labour Conference and Apex Court ruling in Raptakos Brett case;

(d) whether a separate national level legislation would be enacted for agricultural workers covering workers in farming, horticulture, sericulture and other related sectors;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the detailed reasons?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Possibilities are being explored by the Government for extending social security net to the unorganized workers by rationalization of labour laws.

(c) In fixing the minimum wages, the norms prescribed by the 15th Session of the Indian Labour Conference and the Judgement of the Hon' Supreme Court in Reptakos Brett case are being kept in view.

(d) to (f) The Government earlier made efforts to enact a Central Legislation for the the workers engaged in agriculture, horticulture and other allied activities. However, this could not be processed due to lack of consensus amongst the States.